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Examiner:

emphasized that any patent issued less than a year before applicant's effective filing date of May 23, 1997, is not admitted to be prior art.

A list of patents and/or publications is set forth on the attached Form PTO 1449. A copy of each item listed is supplied herewith.

It is submitted that these references do not disclose the present invention and thus the claims herein are patentably distinct therefrom.

Any fees required for the proper filing of this Information Disclosure Statement should be withdrawn from Locke Liddell & Sapp, LLP Deposit Account No. 12-1781.

Respectfully submitted,

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